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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 000696

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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [KDRG](#) [PREL](#) [KTFN](#) [KU](#)  
SUBJECT: NSB ACKNOWLEDGES INCREASED AL QAEDA ACTIVITY AND  
CALLS FOR ENHANCED BILATERAL COOPERATION

Classified By: CDA Alan G. Misenheimer for reasons 1.4 b and d

¶1. (S) Summary: Kenneth Wainstein, President Bush's Assistant for Homeland Security and Counter-terrorism (APHSCT), met with the President of the National Security Bureau (NSB), Ahmed Al-Fahd on 11 June. The principals discussed the recent increase in Al-Qaeda-related activity in Kuwait, ongoing efforts to staunch the flow of fighters and funds into Iraq, and the need for enhanced counter-terrorism cooperation. End summary.

#### Regional Support for the Al-Maliki Government

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¶2. (S) On June 11, APHSCT Wainstein and his delegation, accompanied by DCM and Embassy notetaker, met with Shaykh Ahmed Al-Fahd Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al Sabah, the President of the GOK's National Security Bureau, and his deputy, Shaykh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah Al-Salem Al Sabah. Shaykh Ahmed indicated that he had read President Bush's letter to the Amir of Kuwait, which noted USG concern about the presence of known terrorists in Kuwait and called for intensified counter-terrorism measures by the GOK in cooperation with the USG. The NSB chief welcomed the letter, commenting that bilateral CT cooperation was already strong but could certainly be improved.

¶3. (S) Shaykh Ahmed noted that he had just returned from the Group of Six meeting in Saudi Arabia, and reported that the Saudi and Emirati governments had made pledges to upgrade their formal cooperation with the government of Nouri Al-Maliki in Iraq. Shaykh Ahmed added that he expected the Egyptian government to follow the lead of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and UAE and increase its cooperation with the Iraqi government in the near future. He claimed that his government has long been supportive of the Al-Maliki government, and, in particular, expressed strong support for the recent crackdown on illegal militias in southern Iraq.

#### Increased Al Qaeda-related Activity in Kuwait

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¶4. (S) Shaykh Ahmed stated that the NSB has noted an increase in terrorist-related activity in Kuwait in recent months. He said that Al-Qaeda had increased its efforts to raise funds and to recruit volunteers in Kuwait, pointing to the reported involvement of up to three Kuwaiti citizens in suicide bombings in Mosul and northern Iraq in recent weeks.

¶5. (S) Shaykh Ahmed insisted that fundraising for terrorist activities in Kuwait is not taking place in any formal or legal manner, but rather in the form of small, ad hoc donations that are extremely difficult to detect and interdict. He noted that it typically costs between \$3,500

and \$4,000 to send a volunteer to Iraq or Pakistan, and that such sums were easily raised in Kuwait, given the relatively large salaries paid to most of the Kuwaiti workforce. He stated that Syria is the principal conduit for volunteers and funds flowing to Iraq for Al-Qaeda activities, adding that all support for illegal Shi'a militias is being channeled through Iran.

¶16. (S) Shaykh Ahmed urged the USG to investigate the role of small foreign currency exchange outfits in Jordan, many of which, he claimed, divert approximately 20% of their transactions, value to Iraq for terrorist purposes. He acknowledged the likelihood that similar transactions are being undertaken in certain Kuwaiti foreign currency exchange outlets, but asserted that Kuwaiti authorities are closely monitoring the situation.

¶17. (S) When asked about the role of the Syria-based Abu Ghadiya network, both Ahmed and Thamer sidestepped the issue. They suggested that it is difficult to pinpoint individuals given the major role played by elements of the Syrian intelligence services in facilitating the movement of terrorists and related financing into Iraq.

#### Claims of Inadequate Intelligence Sharing

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¶18. (S) Ahmed Al-Fahd and his deputy both commented on what they perceived to be inadequacies in the sharing of intelligence between USG and Kuwait. Shaykh Ahmed said that the USG is often not forthcoming, and that cooperation with the British government was "much better" in this regard.

KUWAIT 00000696 002 OF 002

Shaykh Thamer was outspoken in his criticism, claiming that this has been a recurring problem for several years.  
(Comment: This is a familiar theme with Ahmed Al-Fahd and Thamer. It is not supported by the facts. End comment.)

#### Counter-Terrorism Legislation

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¶19. (S) When asked about counter-terrorism legislation, Shaykh Ahmed said that a draft bill is with the Cabinet, and that he expects the Government to lobby for the bill in the Parliament in the near future. "This will come," he said. The USG delegation expressed concern that inadequacies in existing legislation undermine efforts to combat terrorism, pointing to the ability of former GTMO detainee Abdullah Al-Ajmi to sue the GOK to return his passport, which he then reportedly used to travel to Iraq prior to undertaking a suicide bombing mission. Shaykh Ahmed and Shaykh Thamer acknowledged the problems with the existing legal framework, but added that the GOK intelligence services have the wherewithal to control potential troublemakers regardless of court decisions.

¶10. (C) The participants of the meetings, which took place at the office of the NSB President included:

U.S.  
Kenneth Wainstein, Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism  
DCM Alan Misenheimer  
Nicholas Rasmussen, Senior Director for Combating Terrorism, NSC  
John Duncan, Director for Combating Terrorism, NSC  
Kate Gladney, Assistant to Mr. Wainstein  
Ludovic Hood (notetaker)

NSB  
Shaykh Ahmed Al-Fahd Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al Sabah, NSB President  
Shaykh Thamer Al Sabah, NSB deputy head  
Other NSB staff, names not provided

¶11. (U) This cable has been cleared by APHSCT Wainstein.

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MISENHEIMER